



## CUMBERLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P O Box 82

4A Blanchard Road

Cumberland, ME 04021

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Vice Presidents:	Diana Copp
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### MISSION STATEMENT:

The purpose of the Society shall be to collect and preserve artifacts pertaining to the Town of Cumberland and its history, making it available to groups, schools, and individuals.

DECEMBER THOUGHTS:

Another oldie but goodie for this season.

## Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

### NEWSEUM



[Click here to see the newspaper clipping](#)



Newsman Francis Pharcellus Church wrote *The Sun's* response to Virginia.

Eight-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon wrote a letter to the editor of New York's *Sun*, and the quick response was printed as an unsigned editorial Sept. 21, 1897. The work of veteran newsman Francis Pharcellus Church has since become history's most reprinted newspaper editorial, appearing in part or whole in dozens of languages in books, movies, and other editorials, and on posters and stamps.

"DEAR EDITOR: I am 8 years old.  
"Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus.  
"Papa says, 'If you see it in THE SUN it's so.'  
"Please tell me the truth; is there a Santa Claus?"

"VIRGINIA O'HANLON.  
"115 WEST NINETY-FIFTH STREET."

VIRGINIA, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, VIRGINIA, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no VIRGINIAS. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, VIRGINIA, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

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**NOVEMBER MEETING:** The historic staged readings at Prince Memorial Library were both interesting and a lot of fun for those participating and for those in attendance. This program really brought Cumberland's history back to life. Thomas Bennett, Library Director, has created a paper about the population decline in Cumberland after the Civil War using relevant Cumberland people and their businesses as examples. Jennifer Gifford, at the Library, put the interpreters together, and off we went!

The following excerpts are from Thomas' paper:

"On May 17, 1942, Rev. Curtis Cady Busby preached as a candidate and was hired to serve as pastor. A major event of his service was the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the founding of the (Cumberland Congregational) Church, which took place August 29, 1943. Many members of the congregation, especially descendants of early parishioners, dressed in costumes of former days. After the morning service, at which Rev. Mr. Busby was the speaker, a social hour was held in the vestry. At the afternoon service, Mrs. Millard Burnell read a history of the church, and Mrs. Harlan Sweetser read a poem, 'The Country Church', by a former church member, Miss Nellie Sweetser. The main speaker was Dr. Alexander D. Dodd, of the faculty of Bangor Theological Seminary.

Also that day, a photograph was taken of all the septuagenarians and octogenarians among the celebrants. The thirteen assembled represented some of the oldest families of the town, and were in the twilight of remarkable lives. Each among them had witnessed the Civil War or its immediate aftermath, Reconstruction, the Spanish-American War, World War One, and the Great Depression. Most of them would live to see the end of World War Two, which was currently being waged. These national and international events had affected the town and its residents in countless ways, and each of the thirteen had experienced them firsthand. Each of them also lived during a period of time of drastic importance locally, the period 1860-1920, when Cumberland lost more than a third of its population. At incorporation in 1821, the new town had 1,386 residents, a figure that increased to 1,713 by 1860. Cumberland then registered steady population declines through 1920, when census figures show a population of 1,150."

The photograph mentioned in the second paragraph is on display at the Library in the section where the copier stands.

The following excerpt discusses one of the members of that photograph:

“EDWARD B. OSGOOD (from the Floyd Norton book):

The freight house was the busy place in the Junction village (*the area on Longwoods Road by the railroad tracks at Cross Street* ). The ‘way freight’ to and from Bath every day brought assorted things consigned to Cumberland people: barrels of flour and sugar, a hogshead of molasses now and then for E. B. Osgood who ran a butcher shop and store on SHE Street, which is to say the North Yarmouth Road, a little way above Greely Institute (*It is now Food Stop on Main Street. It was called SHE Street because, at one time there were mainly single women or widows living on the street.* ) ; similar things for James L. Dunn who ran a more general store 50 yards below the 4 corners at the Center (*now the apartment building diagonally across from the church*) all manner of sundries and appliances, even to a piano or an organ now and then, kitchen ranges and bed springs, cream separators and cement block machines, gallon cans of maple syrup and all the rest of the spices and condiments and furnishings that it took to run the homes of the town ----previously ordered from Portland stores or from mail-order houses out West. All of these, not to mention the stacks of tin lard pails and other containers already embossed or labeled for F.R. Sweetser & Son who ran a processing and packing plant of their own, up on Blanchard Road (*now The Apple Barrel owned and operated b F.R.’s grandson, Dick, and great grandson, Greg*), as well as the other stacks of tin lard pails bearing the name of E. B. Osgood, the other packer in town. Some of those stacks of pails for these men would run to 10 feet in length, with four or five stacks at a shipment. On a Monday morning that freight house might, perchance, be well-nigh empty, but after the ‘way freight’ had come out and gone on its way to Bath the freight house would be stacked to the roof. .... there were two or three other stores, too. Like Ed Osgood’s small grocery in connection with his packing plant. He was no man for mischievous kids to tamper with. The cut holes in the canvas sides of two of his meat wagons and splashed paint on them one Halloween night, but Ed could see ----in the dark, it seems. Result? Six boys, the culprits, spent a good part of the next day patching holes and cleaning canvas ---- or their parents paid \$10.00 apiece --- to put those meat wagons into clean shape and ready for the road again. Ed packed too much weight with his three centum weight to tempt boys to vandalism again.”



Tin lard pails of F.R. Sweetser and E.B. Osgood .

From the collection of artifacts and photos at the Cumberland Historical Society .

Maine Central Railroad passenger station at Longwoods Road. The freight station stood across the tracks.



### **DECEMBER STUMPER:**

What is a hoghead? ( Answer at the end of the newsletter.)

### **ITEMS FOR SALE:**

There are now coloring books of Historic Cumberland for \$5.00 using some of the sketches that Tony Lisa has created for the calendars. Also there are Christmas cards, "An Ornament of Grace", "How to Research Your Old House", and some other items, along with the 2014 calendar with beautiful pen & ink sketches of various buildings, scenes and people from Cumberland in the past. These drawings are created by local artist, Tony Lisa, and each picture has a one-line historical description. There are only 100 of these calendars printed and they are selling for \$10.00 each. Great Christmas gifts!

### **CONDOLENCES:**

To Evelyn Thurston and her family on the death of her husband, David. David and Evelyn were part of the group of those dedicated and hard –working people who put the Cumberland Historical Society Museum together at the schoolhouse. He was also treasurer and trustee for many years. He will be missed by many.

### **BUSINESS:**

On January 7<sup>th</sup> there will be a meeting with the 501c3 committee and the following week on the 14<sup>th</sup> the Officers and Board of Trustees will meet. The 501c3 committee has been working on getting that put together so that we can utilize the advantages of being a full-fledged 501c3 and how that it will affect us. Also want to discuss another Old House Tour for this summer, and create a committee for it. Important meetings.

### **ACQUISITIONS:**

From Leigh Fulda, we received a 1990 Greely Shield, from Bob Hale we received a 2000 Greely Shield. Great additions to the yearbook collection. Rand Surgi donated a catalogue of designs for kit houses, including the one that his grandfather, Ernest Rand, used to build his home on Main Street. We have three other known kit houses in Cumberland, all on Tuttle Road down close to the power line. They were all built by the Jones boys , and John and Barbara Chandler live in one of them.

Definition of kit houses:

**Kit houses**, also known as **mill-cut houses**, **pre-cut houses**, **ready-cut houses**, **mail order homes**, or **catalog homes**, were a type of housing that was popular in the United States and Canada in the first half of the 20th century.<sup>1</sup> Kit house manufacturers sold houses in many different plans and styles, from simple [bungalows](#) to imposing [Colonials](#), and supplied at a fixed price all materials needed for construction of a particular house, but typically excluding brick, concrete, or masonry (such as would be needed for laying a foundation, which the customer would have to arrange to have done locally).

## A PLEA FOR HELP!!

The Cumberland Historical Society, organized in 1936, is housed in the red brick schoolhouse at 4A Blanchard Road. The schoolhouse is a facility for most of the meetings that are held ten months a year. These historically informational meetings are open to the residents of the Town of Cumberland, as well as to the general public. The building is also a storage repository for the collection of documents relating to the 192 year history of the Town of Cumberland, a museum to display the irreplaceable Cumberland artifacts, and an educational locale. It is at this place that the Cumberland Historical Society directs the lessons each year for the nearly 200 third grade students of MSAD 51 about the town's history. This is a curriculum component aligned to the Maine Learning Results. Members also do genealogical work, and do studies on the old houses in the town.

When the Town of Cumberland turned the building over to the Cumberland Historical Society in 1987, it was renovated inside, and converted to the museum by the members of the Society. They had collected the funds to do so on their own. It is now apparent that the furnace of this 1853 schoolhouse building is no longer working. It has served the building and the Historical Society well, but it is the original furnace, installed in the late 1980's, with only one necessary update until this year. It has completely stopped, and the company that made this furnace has been out of business since the year 2000. We have studied some options, and have come to

Our second issue is security. The installation of a security system would help protect the important Cumberland artifacts located in the building. These artifacts are the legacy of the town. They sit in the building unprotected. While not necessarily valuable in monetary terms, they cannot be replaced if they are lost by fire or theft because they are relevant only to this town, and are one-of-a-kind items. We have been in touch with a company that can install a system designed for us.

With this pressing issue at hand, and a small bank account to accommodate it, we now turn to the to the residents of the Town of Cumberland and make this plea for individual donations to cover the costs of installing a new heating system. We have made several attempts to accumulate funds, and will continue to do so, but have still fallen short. With cold weather rapidly approaching, the integrity of the building faces freezing up. That means damaging not only the building, but the contents, and that would be a significant historical, educational, and cultural blow to the Town of Cumberland. If each resident of this town donated a mere \$5.00, this concern would be dismissed. Isn't that a small price to pay to protect the heritage of your community?

Please support the protection of the history of your town.

Your thoughtful donation can be sent to:

Furnace Fund

Cumberland Historical Society

P.O. Box 82

Cumberland, ME 04021

**MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO HAVE ALREADY MADE  
A CONTRIBUTION TO THE FURNACE FUND!**

We have received donations ranging from \$5.00 to \$200.00 from members and many townspeople who have answered the call for help. Every dollar counts. Another thanks goes to the members who helped with the various tables selling items to build up the fund. All the items that we have on the sales tables add to the fund as well. The old furnace and oil tank “have left the building”, and we are proceeding with the next step.

Thank you , Linda Fulda for purchasing and nailing up the three beautiful wreaths on the doors of the Cumberland Historical Society.

**ANSWER TO THE DECEMBER STUMPER:**      hogs-head : *noun*

1. a large cask, especially one containing from 63 to 140 gallons (238 to 530 liters).
2. any of various units of liquid measure, especially one equivalent to 63 gallons (238 liters). *Abbr:* hhd **Origin:** 1350–1400; Middle English *hoggeshed*, literally, hog's head;

May this joyful holiday season bring health and  
happiness to all!

The Officers and Trustees of the Cumberland Historical  
Society



Thanks to our corporate sponsor, Sevee & Maher Engineers



Membership Application/Renewal

2013 -2014

CUMBERLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P O Box 82

Cumberland, ME 04021

Membership application:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TOWN or CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ CELL: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you your newsletter sent by email \_\_\_\_\_ or by USPS \_\_\_\_\_ ?

WINTER ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DATES THAT THE WINTER ADDRESS APPLIES: \_\_\_\_\_

IF YOUR BUSINESS IS INTERESTED IN BEING A CORPORATE SPONSOR, PLEASE INDICATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership dues are \$10.00 per person \_\_\_\_\_

Corporate membership is \$100.00. \_\_\_\_\_

Committees: 501c3 \_\_\_\_\_ Program \_\_\_\_\_

Refreshments \_\_\_\_\_ Special Events \_\_\_\_\_

Publicity \_\_\_\_\_

75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Cumberland Historical Society \_\_\_\_\_

